

NAME: Uyematsu, Francis Miyasaku DATE OF BIRTH: _____ PLACE OF BIRTH: Shizuoka
 Age: 91 Sex: M Marital Status: M Education: 4th Grade Elementary School

PRE-WAR:
 Date of arrival in U.S.: 9/1904 Age: _____ M.S. S Port of entry: San Fran.
 Occupation/s: 1. School Boy 2. Nursery Business 3. _____
 Place of residence: 1. Salinas, Ca. 2. Los Angeles, Ca. 3. _____
 Religious affiliation: Christian Church
 Community organizations/activities: Los Angeles Cholo Kyokai and Nihonjinkai & American Japanese Fraternity

EVACUATION:
 Name of assembly center: Pomona Assembly Center
 Name of relocation center: Manzanar, Ca.
 Dispensation of property: Nursery - Taken care of by ^{manager.} Names of bank/s: _____
 Jobs held in camp: 1. Park Supervisor 2. _____
 Jobs held outside of camp: _____
 Left camp to go to: Sierra Madre, Ca.

POST-WAR:
 Date returned to West Coast: 1944
 Address/es: 1. Sierra Madre, Ca. (1 yr) 2. Los Angeles, Ca.
 3. _____
 Religious affiliation: Christian Church
 Activities: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
 If deceased, date, place and age at time of death: _____

Name of interviewer: Joe Abe Date: 7/9/72 Place: Los Angeles, Ca.

Translator: Haru Nikaido

FRANCIS MIYASAKU UYEMATSU

Interviewed by Dr. Joe Abe

Translated by Mrs. Haru Nikaido

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IN JAPAN

ABE: What is your name?

UYEMATSU: Francis Uyematsu Miyasaku

ABE: Where were you born?

UYEMATSU: Shizuoka-ken, Japan

ABE: Do you remember anything about the wars? Sino^a-Japanese war?
Russo-Japanese War?

UYEMATSU: At the time of the Nisshin senso I was in koto shogakko second year. I could remember sending the soldiers off or welcoming them home

I remember the declaration of war between Russia and Japan as February 11, 1904. That same year I came to the United States.

ABE: Do you remember any events like tsunami, earthquakes, plagues?
How about happy events, sad events, things you suffered?

UYEMATSU: I didn't have any such experiences. Just received word of such happenings in Japan.

ABE: What was the religion of your family?

UYEMATSU: When I was born the religion of the family was Nichiren. However, my mother was Catholic.

ABE: Did you hear anything about Christianity in Japan?

UYEMATSU: I heard about Christianity from my mother,

ABE: How much formal education did you have?

UYEMATSU: Koto Shogakko (elementary school) fourth grade. As a child I used to get nosebleeds that were very bad. They would last from seven o'clock in the evening to ten o'clock. The doctor put some white medicine in my mouth and it stopped it temporarily however, I got nosebleeds again. Due to that I couldn't finish school ... and thereafter the feeling for study left me.

AB E: What was the reason you came over to the USA?

UYEMATSU: The Russo Japanese War started at this time. My father was a bunseki. And he said, "With your health you can't do anything for this

(CONT) UYEMATSU: war effort so why don't you go to America?" I arrived in United States in September, 1904. I joined the CHOLO KYOKAI.

ON THE SHIP

ABE: When you left Japan did you go through Hawaii?

UYEMATSU: Yes, I came thru Hawaii. I can't remember the conditions there as we stopped for only a few hours.

ABE: What kind of people were on the ship?

UYEMATSU: Just a few people going to South America were on the ship.

ABE: What kind of a ship?

UYEMATSU: The name of the ship was America Maru. It was a ship that couldn't participate in the Japanese Russo War because it was too small.

ABE: Do you remember anything which happened on the ship?

UYEMATSU: What comes to my mind while I was on the ship was the advice of a friend named Wada. He said since you do not have the health of a laborer or a student you had better go where the climate is good like SALINAS. So thru an acquaintance of my father, a Mr. Noda I became an agricultural helper in that area. When the agricultural season ended I moved into the city of SALINAS. I met the Assistant Rev. Makoto Kobayashi of the Cholo Kyokai and the Rev. Kenichi Inagawa of the Kyulo Kyokai. In 1904 on Christmas I was baptized and became a member of the Kyulo Kyokai.

ABE: What was your expectation of America?

UYEMATSU: The advancement of this country greatly impressed me.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF AMERICA

AB E: What was your first impression of America?

UYEMATSU: That's difficult for me to answer.

ABE: How did the immigration officers treat you?

UYEMATSU: Not necessarily different.

ABE: What did you do when you landed in America for the First time?

UYEMATSU: Schoolboy and housework jobs.

ABE: How did white people treat you?

UYEMATSU: Kindly. I changed schoolboy jobs two or three times but had no bad experiences.

ABE: Memories concerning various situations - - happy experiences, sad, experiences, funny ones.

UYEMATSU: Is that over a long period of time?

ABE: Yes.

UYEMATSU: In 1906 I came to Los Angeles and joined Cholo Kyokai. I worked as a cook in a home. In 1908 I started my own nursery business. I had hardly any hardships.

SETTLEMENT

ABE: How did you find your bride?

UYEMATSU: I wrote my parents about the nursery that I had started. And they thought being in a business alone must be quite inconvenient so they wrote they would look for a prospective bride.

ABE: What kind of wedding ceremony did you have?

UYEMATSU: My parents decided on the ideal person for me. They picked my bride.

ABE: Do you remember any interesting stories about picture bride?

UYEMATSU: Mine was not a picture bride marriage so I do not have any recollections.

AB E: Have you ever been homesick?

UYEMATSU: No, I haven't.

AB E: What kind of hardship did you have in order to get used to the American way of life?

UYEMATSU:

ABE: Have you ever been discriminated?

UYEMATSU: No, I haven't been necessary discriminated against.

ABE: How did you learn English?

UYEMATSU: I primarily learned English at the church nite school. I haven't had any formal English education and I wasn't in the mood of studying.

ABE: When did you buy a house? Did you have any difficulties?

UYEMATSU: As I stated my nursery business which I started in 1908 was doing very good. I was specializing in importing Japanese plants. My nursery in Los Angeles got crowded so in 1912 I purchased 5 acres in Montebello. Fortunately, at that time a non-citizen could purchase land without any difficulty. In 1913 the law changed.

ABE: Japanese organizations like JACL, kenjinkai, churches, farm organizations, did they help you?

UYEMATSU: In the beginning I was with the Los Angeles Cholo Kyokai and the Nihonjinkai with Inazawa sensei as President. With the caucasians I joined the American Japanese Fraternity which in 1910 became the Michibei Kyokai.

ABE: What kind of entertainment, hobbies, and other things did you enjoy?

UYEMATSU: As a child I had to recuperate and rest. From my upstairs bedroom I used to see Mt. Fujii and the cherry blossoms. The cherry blossoms stole my interest and I have a great love for them.

ABE: What do you remember about rearing children?

UYEMATSU: The nursery business ran smoothly; better than I thought it would. I had no economical problems.

ABE: Do you remember anything about segregated schools?

UYEMATSU: There was no segregation of importance. But what comes to my mind that this must be race prejudice happened when my oldest daughter was graduating from elementary school. She was the highest student of the graduating class and it was not publicly acclaimed; the information was just given to our family.

ABE: Did you send your children back to Japan?

UYEMATSU: Only the oldest daughter wanted to go to Japan after graduating high school. So she went and studied in Japan for 3 years.

DEPRESSION PERIOD

ABE: What kind of hardship did you experience? Did it affect your business?

UYEMATSU: As a whole, the worst years of business for others were from 1929 - 1930 but for myself it was the best years.

AB E: What a blessing!

WORLD WAR II

ABE: What kind of attitudes did the whites have towards the Japanese? Did their attitudes change towards you?

UYEMATSU: Is that 1941, World War II? At the time of my business?

ABE: Yes.

ABE: When Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, what did you think first of all? How did you feel?

UYEMATSU: My manager and I went to San Francisco on business in December 1941. On the way back from San Francisco, when we were in the vicinity of Santa Barbara we heard about Pearl Harbor over the radio and were shocked. We hurriedly drove home to Los Angeles and reached home about 8:30 p.m. All the Los Angeles "yushi" (active in community affairs) were taken by the FBI. This was the situation and I was not picked up by the FBI. Due to business reasons I had to travel around to Montebello, Sierra Madre, Huntington Beach. I carried my underclothing with me at all times just in case I should be picked up.

AB E: When you got to know about evacuation, how did you feel about the coming event?

UYEMATSU: My feeling was "shi kataganai deshita". (can't be helped)

ABE: How did you go to Assembly Center and Relocation Camp?

UYEMATSU: I went to Pomona Assembly Center. As you know we went by areas and our area was to go to Pomona Assembly Center.

ABE: How did you take care of your house, possessions and business?

UYEMATSU: When we were ready to leave for Pomona Assembly Center the children were very, very sad. They were sad to leave the playful

UYEMATSU:
(cont.)

shepherd dog that romped and played around the yard and swimming pool. My wife's last remark as we were leaving the home was I wonder if we will all safely (buji de) return home. My oldest daughter, Fumiko, had poor health and in camp contracted lung trouble. After being put in Olive View Sanitarium she passed away at the age of 23.

ABE: How did your white friends feel about this?

UYEMATSU: When I was getting a reference for the FB I, I asked a large nurseryman nearby to write me a recommendation however, he wouldn't do it. But there were others who stood up for me. Montebello, at that time was a small town and there were a few people who had bad feelings toward the Japanese. Some people held a grudge even at the end of the war. My friend, Murata, confronted prejudice even after returning from camp to Montebello. Today, Montebello has a large Japanese community but at the time of the end of the war there was lots of prejudice.

ABE: How did you take care of your business?

UYEMATSU: My manager found a friend to run the nursery. This person wasn't experienced in business and he lacked interest. I had five businesses then. I worried in camp and had lots of property then. I knew the manager and bookkeeper were working together. I wanted so badly to get out of camp and see to my businesses. When I asked the authorities, they said I could go out however, that I would be in great danger of persecution.

Also, during this time I got a wonderful idea (meian) and wrote a story the title was ("Ippiki no ushi"), It was made public to the camp. Soon after that, I was advised that I could leave July 5 from camp with an escort to attend to my business. The details of this trip is enclosed in this story book

ABE: How much financial loss did you suffer?

UYEMATSU: Yes, my loss was tremendous. ~~This is a copy of the original of the~~
~~Richfield Jones~~. Mr. Bodi ~~was the biggest nurseryman at that~~
~~time and his~~ manager said the Uyematsu camellias have a great
 future and told him why not purchase them? ^{(Mr Bodi was editor of the L.A.} I raised the price ^{Illustrated}
 a bit but they still wanted to buy out all of my camellias;
 my count was 500,000 plants. They gave me 10% of 280,000
 plants. He sold many of my camellias to Descanso Gardens.
 It is considered the biggest camellia garden in the world. All
 these came from my nursery.

ABE: Which camp did you go to?

UYEMATSU: I went to Manzanar. I wanted to go there because it was in Calif.
 I wanted to make a recreation park there. I took lots of my cherry
 blossoms, azaleas and wisteria vines there. The park I directed
 was near the hospital.

ABE: How old were your children when you evacuated?

UYEMATSU: The oldest was a son 19 years of age and he went to Chicago. I had
 three more children below him, two years apart.

ABE: How did the white churches react to this evacuation?

UYEMATSU: I had no experience with them.

ASSEMBLY CENTER, RELOCATION CENTER

ABE: What do you remember about the place itself?

UYEMATSU: Very pleasant. However, there were four sentry towers and barbed wire
 fencing all around us. There was one killing. They said he tried to
 escape.

ABE: What did you think about the problem of loyalty?

UYEMATSU: I heard it was good to get references from caucasian friends. So I
 had one from the Chief of Police of Montebello. I took it to the
 FBI Office not knowing that it was this office that interned the
 men evacuated us.

The FBI office had a large room and a receptionist in it. They took
 only a single person at a time. I told them I was Uyematsu, then
 they interview me. When I returned home my manager asked me how

UYEMATSU: everything went and I said just fine. I couldn't understand
(cont.) why he was so overjoyed at this interview. When my interview was over and I left the building I recall seeing "Federal Bureau of Investigation" - I didn't know what it meant. When I came home I asked a Japanese friend what is the "Federal Bureau of Investigation"? And he said in great astonishment "That's the FBI!"

ABE: What kind of events took place there?

UYEMATSU: Before the war started there was a man who was thought to be a spy. When the camp was celebrating the first anniversary of being in camp, the masses wanted to kill this particular person. They found out he was hiding in the hospital and the masses gathered outside of the hospital. One person got shot during this riot. I think this was Manzanar's most critical moment.

ABE: What did you think about the problem of loyalty?

UYEMATSU: The boys in these relocation centers were drafted and willingly went to war. After the war, my oldest boy was also drafted. Just at that time, my heart was getting bad and I needed him to run things at home so he was returned home. I got my health back later.

ABE: How did you think about Nisei volunteering

UYEMATSU: I think it was a very good thing.

ABE: What kind of entertainment did you have in camp?

UYEMATSU: I was a nurseryman and liked plants, so in camp that was my hobby. I also played "goh" and "shokaku".

ABE: What kind of job did you have in camp?

UYEMATSU: My job was to watch the park in camp. They made me a supervisor.

ABE: How was your religious life there? Did you go to church?

UYEMATSU: Yes, we had several churches and many ministers - so I attended regularly.

ABE: What did you think about the problem of education of children in the camp?

UYEMATSU: I thought the children were all being fairly well educated.

AB E: Did your faith change during the camp period?
 Uyematsu: No, not particularly; my faith has not changed.

RESETTLEMENT

ABE: When did you leave the Camp?
 UYEMATSU: Let me see, was it 1944? We got out in 1944 and most of the other camp people got out in 1945.
 ABE: Did you go out on your own?
 UYEMATSU: Yes, we did.
 ABE: Did you come out to California?
 UYEMATSU: Yes, we did. The manager quit work for our nursery and the book-keeper took over. He was living in our home therefore, we lived in Sierra Madre for one year.
 AB E: Did you return to your former nursery business?
 UYEMATSU: Definitely, however, the manager controlled everything except that of being able to sell the property. He jotted down \$5000 received on the books when he actually he got \$10,000. Later on oil was discovered on my Manhattan B each property I have a story to tell. We had Mexican workers and we used red or white flags to let them know it was time to work or time to quit. Well, somebody called the FBI.
 ABE: Was this after the war?
 UYEMATSU: The signal story is one year before the war started.
 ABE: How was the attitude of whites towards you after the war?
 UYEMATSU: I had no particular prejudice problems.
 ABE: How was the process of education of your children?
 UYEMATSU: I had no educational problem with my children/
 ABE: During the war did you have any prejudice problem?
 UYEMATSU: No, nothing in particular.

APPENDIX

ABE: As a Christian what is your hope for the future?

UYEMATSU: I am retired but served as a deacon for the past 8 years. I do what I can - I am not educated and not a good speaker. However, I am always concerned about choosing the right minister for our church. I helped Toriumi-sensai to come to our church; I also help pick substitutes when needed. I am retired but I will try to do whatever I can.

As a Christian my whole life has been blessed. Today I am 91 years of age. Before 1904 I was always sickly until I came to the United States in that year. I have never been in a hospital in the United States and I am very happy.

ABE: This interview was taped at the home of Mr. Francis Miyasaku Uyematsu on a Sunday afternoon, July 9, 1972. This is your interviewer, Joe Abe, of the First Presbyterian Church of Altadena.

This being the first interview, I think there are a few things that I might add that might help other interviewers. Some of the most interesting things that I failed to record didn't get on this tape because I shut the interview recording off after the formal questioning and I think that was a big mistake. I should have left the recorder on after the interview was over and during this period of time in which we were just chatting informally. The subject of the interview was much more relaxed and we talked more freely, when the interview was over. And I think many things which he did not say during the formal part of the questioning failed to get recorded because I had shut the recorder off. But I think for anyone who might interview someone else might just leave the recorder on after the formal part of the interview is over and record all the offhand relaxed remarks which are made during the informal chatting that takes place after the formal recording is completed. This is one suggestion I may add.

ABE: Also, another mistake I made was not to have Mrs. Uyematsu
(cont) sit in during the recording. She was sitting by and she didn't
get an opportunity to make any comment. And afterwards, why,
she had as much insight as the husband had said. And I think,
here, too, it would have been much more interesting had we allowed
her to sit in on the recording. But, being a typical Issei family I guess
I guess the husband took charge and she sat quietly by in the back
serving us tea. This comment probably will add more fuel to the
Women's Lib Movement.

This concludes this recording. I got about a quarter of a reel
of tape left, so I didn't fill it all up. I certainly could have
if I had left the tape on during the informal part of the chatting.
Oh, well, I'll know better next time.